

THE CITY PROBLEM

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I. THE EMMIGRANT

What is the future of our great cities? This is a question which forces itself upon all who have the welfare of the nation at heart. The political control of the cities lies within the densely populated districts. We must study these districts and make every effort to improve them or our cities will become a menace to the nation. That a change is rapidly taking place in every large industrial center is a fact only too well known. The improved transportation facilities and the modern homes in the suburbs make rural life possible to all the better classes, not only to the people of means, but to those who receive a fair salary and hold permanent positions. The constant loss to our city life and its institutions by these removals cannot be estimated. No one can be blamed for seeking a broader life, pure air, pleasant surroundings, and better opportunities to rear their children; and consequently we must expect this exodus to continue until practically all the members of this class of society have forsaken city life. Even if our cities should be entirely rebuilt and modernized, it is problematical whether these people could be retained. As a result, fine old residential sections of large cities have totally changed. Churches have been turned into factories, garages, warehouses, amusement halls, etc., and the general trend has been downward, tenement and rooming houses abounding.

In order better to understand this transformation, we will divide into three classes the inhabitants of these localities, namely, Americans, Jewish and Gentile immigrants. First, we will take up the Americans, who are composed of: (a) The poorer artisans and laborers, whose employment is irregular, wages small and who are being made poorer constantly by competition with the immigrants. These are the only worthy poor in the old section, and they are often driven by distressing circumstances and intemperance into either the lodging-house element or crime. (b) The rooming-house element, who are mostly the young people drawn from the poorer agricultural classes (such as tenant farmers and farm laborers), and out-of-town factory workers, who are constantly

coming into the cities. A large portion of this population is female. They usually find work in underpaid industries and necessity forces them to live where room rents are cheap. Their employment being uncertain and irregular, inmates of houses of vice and criminals are largely recruited from this class. (c) The lodging-house element, which consists of those who have practically given up the struggle and become wanderers, begging their way through the world, going from city to city, dependent upon the bounty of missions when they are no longer able to pay the cheap rates of lodging houses. (d) The criminal: the men in this class live a life of petty crime such as pick-pocketing, holdups and burglarizing, while others live upon the proceeds derived from the vice of women. The women in this class either live a life of open shame or supplement their wages by moral irregularities.

Most of the religious work done for the poorer Americans is of the sensational rescue and mission type, conducted in vacant stores or old buildings, by methods that are crude and have no connection with the religious life these people enjoyed in their former homes. Only the lowest type of these people are reached in this manner, and when they have fallen to the level of the slum mission, it is very difficult to improve them. I do not want to minimize the good that is being done by this type of mission work, but why not use our discarded churches for this purpose, manned by clergy who are sympathetic and able to make a study of the existing conditions? In furtherance with this plan, we could add sisterhoods, who in quiet and confidence could work amongst the women: houses where hospitality could be given in a way that would eliminate all stigma; places where social work could be done and where the sweet quiet spirit of the Master prevailed. Of course, unworthy persons will be helped, and the unscrupulous will take advantage, and the expense will be great, but are not the souls and bodies of men and women worth all of this?

We now come to the Hebrew population, with which the Christian church can do very little. The Jew has suffered at the hands of Christians in Europe and his racial instincts have been overly developed. These people are proud and because of their passion for learning feel superior to the Gentiles. More-

over, despite all restrictions and prejudices, they have commercially succeeded. They are generally law-abiding and temperate and soon discern the spirit of those who work amongst them. If the Christian church is to gain an influence among the masses of Hebrew people, her work must be done in a friendly and not in a proselyting manner. The first step towards gaining the Jew's tolerance of the Christian religion is kindness and love. The Jew surrounded by such a Christianity would soon lose his Hebrew characteristics.

The immigrant I put last, although I consider him the most important problem, and that work with him means to a very large extent the future of American Christianity. Civilization owes much to the immigrant. The new world was built by him and he is constantly developing our resources. His character is little understood and prejudice plays a very large part in our treatment of him. Do not let us think that he represents the worst element in Europe, for, as a matter of fact, he represents the most useful and industrious. It must be admitted that it takes courage and perseverance for the peasant of southeastern Europe to leave his old associates and come to a country, whose language and customs are strange, to say nothing of the thrift required to save his passage money. Nowhere is this courage better exhibited than in the steel works and in mines, where thousands are annually sacrificed upon the altar of American industry. Their persistency is graphically illustrated in the way they turn the waste timber lands of the Northwest into farm lands and build their homes in the wilderness. Their love of home and family is nowhere better shown than at the steamship agencies and foreign banks, where tickets and drafts are constantly being sent to loved ones on the other side. Europe has awakened to the fact that she is losing her best people. All the northern countries of Europe are opposing emigration, and doing what they can to improve conditions at home or influencing the emigrant to migrate to colonies of the home country; and now Austria Hungary has begun a campaign to restrict her emigration. These facts account in part for the change in the character of our immigrants since the year 1882. Previous to that time, most of the immigrant population came from the Scandinavian

countries, Germany, Holland, Belgium and the British Isles. The city of London would form the center of a circle including this field. These races, by blood and centuries of contact, were practically one people. They soon became assimilated, learning our customs and language, rapidly developing into Americans. The country was large and sparsely settled; our industries, as yet, undeveloped, and colonizing racially was impossible.

Since then the center of this field has steadily moved eastward until it rests to-day at Constantinople. This includes the Poles, Bohemians, Ruthenians, Hungarians, Servians, Roumanians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Macedonians, Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, Sicilians and southern Italians. These races form colonies, taking, like an invading army, section after section of our cities exclusively for themselves, building business on racial lines, coming in contact with practically only the lower class of Americans. In these districts all foreign customs are observed and the prejudices of centuries are perpetuated, years of political difficulties having a tendency to closely weld them together. When they enter any industry, they monopolize it and the native is excluded. It has become practically impossible for the native American to work at street-cleaning or to enter the tanneries, steel works, mines, etc. The American is therefore forced to rise above the immigrant (industrially) if he is to remain self-respecting. If he cannot do this, he must fall below him, as he finds it impossible to work with him. To this condition is due largely the existence of the lodging-house and criminal classes, as the immigrant is able to live more cheaply and has more thrift and strength, succeeding where the native fails. As a consequence, the native with whom the immigrant comes directly in contact has little to commend him. He gradually loses his hold on certain industries, often being without employment, and thus looks unfavorably upon the immigrant, who more readily finds work, because his countrymen are ever on the alert to secure it for him. The army of the unemployed is largely a native army.

Let us also realize that these foreign peoples have much to contribute to the new world beside mere physical energy. Art, music and crafts have for centuries flourished among them, and they pay

for the many good things we have to offer, with things which build up our civilization. In the process of assimilation, we must not be too urgent upon the immigrant giving up the customs and traditions of his native land, as this only tends to antagonize him. America is still in the making, and by cheerful forbearance and patience, we cannot help but bring out the best that is in these races. Settlements have taken a step in this direction, and while they have done much good, their work is non-religious, whereas these people have strong religious feelings.

II. RELIGIOUS WORK AMONG THE IMMIGRANTS.

The religious work among the immigrants of the nineteenth century was largely done by the Roman church and the Protestant denominations. These bodies were better fitted to meet the situation than ourselves, because the peoples of northern Europe belonged either to the Roman church or one of the reformed bodies. The antagonistic feeling between these two classes of Christians left the Church but a small opportunity, the Roman Catholics feeling that we had adopted too many features of the Reformation, while the reformed bodies felt that we had retained too much of what they considered distinctly Roman. Our growth has been largely from the English-speaking world and those foreigners who have become thoroughly Americanized.

In order to understand our religious opportunities, we must bear in mind the two groups into which Christians are divided, namely, Catholic and Protestant. The Catholic is again divided into two groups, Papal and Episcopal: the Papal, which stands for absolute central authority and uniformity in worship, based upon an Italian standard, and the Episcopal, which stands for the earlier rights of Bishops and the national and racial rights of the people. This permits them to develop their churches in accordance with their characteristics and to maintain a worship in the language of the people. The Protestant group ignores authority and magnifies individual judgment. Into this group fall the hundreds of Christian sects whose whole aim is to make proselytes of every nation and introduce throughout the world the unhappy divisions that have so harmed the religious life here.

These Christians, in their sectarian zeal, have introduced missions in the East and have weakened the Christian population in Mohammedan lands, causing much unhappiness, and for this reason the newer immigrants from southeastern Europe will not be influenced by their efforts.

The people who are coming to this country at the present time come from the oldest Christian lands. They have struggled against every Asiatic invasion, have suffered for centuries under Mohammedan misrule and they have received their Christianity either directly from the Apostles or their successors. Living in the unchanged East, they feel that they have kept the faith in its primitive purity. There is every mark of earnestness and spirituality among them. They have refused for centuries to accept the altered forms of Rome and they now with equal zeal refuse to be proselyted by the more modern forms of Protestantism. They have never known either the Papacy or the Reformation and will follow neither. The American Church is alone able to do a work among them. We belong to the same group of Christians. We are not a schismatic body, as we have never made uncatholic conditions of communion or refused to extend to other clergy and laity the same privileges we extend to our own members. All clergy who have the historic ministry and who hold the Orthodox faith are accepted by us on the same basis as the clergy of the Church of England. But while we believe that the Anglican communion best expresses in her liturgical worship the devout spirit of the English race, we do not expect that (as Rome does) our liturgy would prove acceptable to all the races of men. As long as there are diverse races, there will be diverse ways of expressing the same spirit. Every Catholic liturgy can be used among us. The Churches of the East best express the religious feelings of these people, and it is our duty to supply these thousands of incoming Episcopalians with clergy and services suitable to their understanding. This no other religious body can do, so the work naturally falls to us.

Let us imagine ourselves (if we are to understand our work here) in an American colony in Russia, not understanding the Russian language, but desirous of attending divine services. We would not be attracted to the Russian church;

it would seem very strange to us: nor would we be attracted by a Dukebor (a Russian sect) minister, who would tell us that we must be Russianized at once and that all our religious teachings and experience were totally wrong. Under these conditions what would transpire? Would we not naturally grow careless and our children grow up without the faith? On the other hand, if the Russian priest came and told us that he would secure an Episcopal clergyman for us, that we could have the use of his church in order to hold the services dear to us, that he did not wish to change our religious belief or practices (as his Christian love and the spirit of the Russian church were broad enough to understand us), in what manner would his advances be received? How grateful we would be! What love and respect we would have for the Russian church and its clergy! As our sojourn continued, so would our love for the Russian church deepen, and should it become necessary for us to live in another part of the Empire, we would always feel that the Russian priests were our sincere friends.

III. THE CHURCH OF THE ADVENT

There are over a million Eastern Episcopals in this land, the majority of whom will abide permanently with us. Will we do for them what we would wish them to do for us if the case were reversed? This is the spirit which animates the Church of the Advent, and its influence is already being felt beyond its parochial boundaries. This church is located in the northeastern part of the city's center. The American people in this vicinity are of the classes described in the beginning of this paper, and they are growing fewer year by year. Sociological reasons prevent their attendance at church, while their demands upon the rector, comparatively speaking, are greater than they ever were. There are two or three funerals a week, frequent baptisms, calls upon the sick and dying, demands of many other kinds, such as attendance at magistrates' courts, police stations, etc. The environment is depressing, and the lack of funds, due to the poverty of these people, is trying; nevertheless the Church is doing all she can for the American people in this locality. The Jews we are trying to impress with Christian kindness. We have loaned our Parish House for meet-

ings of interest to them, on several occasions, thereby winning the esteem of the Jewish population in the vicinity.

The American and Jewish population are gradually leaving the district and the various Slavic races of southeastern Europe are taking their places. These people made a new problem for the rector and he tried to arrive at their point of view. He learned that where they resided the price of property was prohibitive and that they were too poor to build their own churches. Their meetings were held in halls and often in places where saloons were established, because they were cheaper. When they held religious services, which was not often, these same halls were used. The Church of the Advent was poorly attended and had a large parish building, which was seldom used on Sundays. Why, then, could not these buildings, which were built for the worship and glory of God, be used by these people? The rector talked the matter over with the people of the various colonies and some of the clergy who occasionally came to minister to these people, and after persistent work to make clear to them the attitude of the Church, he won them over to the idea of using the buildings for their religious services and social meetings. The first arrangement was one made with the Servian priest, who consented to bring his people and to conduct his services at an hour when the church was not being used, and to contribute to the support of the church the same amount of money that he had previously paid for the rental of a hall. An Armenian congregation was also secured, which agreed to the same arrangement and after this a large Ruthenian congregation of about six hundred members, together with its priest. The American priest found these congregations added somewhat to his duties, as he stood ever ready to advise and help them in every good work that was attempted, and at the present time, instead of ministering to about thirty or forty people, the Church of the Advent ministers to about two thousand souls every Sunday. At times the church is crowded to its fullest capacity and even the gallery, which had not been used for years, is filled. There are no intermissions between services. As soon as one congregation is through, another begins, and Sunday is a busy day in the church that but a few years ago was pronounced by one

of the leading clergy of the city, a "forlorn hope."

In order better to understand the work that is being done, we will describe a Sunday at the Church of the Advent. At 7.30 in the morning the Ruthenian service is held, attended by about two hundred people. This service lasts until 9 o'clock. As soon as this is over, the Servians and Roumanians attend, and their service, which is held in the basement of the church, lasts until 10.30. At 10 o'clock the English service begins for a congregation of about one-third Americans and about two-thirds composed of various foreigners, who are beginning to learn English and who have been told by their priests that attendance upon the English services is as much a fulfillment of their religious obligations as attendance upon services conducted in accordance with their own rite. Thus the congregation at the English service has been more than trebled by extending Christian hospitality to others of the same faith, and these people, understanding that we are extending to them sympathy and help without the idea of proselyting, work with the Church in the most friendly manner.

The English service is followed by a Ruthenian service, and this service packs the church to its utmost capacity and lasts until about 1.15 P. M. The Armenians, no longer being able to celebrate the holy communion in the morning, follow the Ruthenians with a service beginning at 2 o'clock. This is done by special dispensation that they have received from their Bishop.

During these services and after them, weddings and funerals are frequently held, either in the Sunday School room, or in the church between services.

The work soon spread from this center and opportunities were found in other districts until from the Church of the Advent have sprung the following missions:

Polish: Frankford, Philadelphia, Pa.; Wilmington, Del.; Camden, N. J.

Syrian: St. Timothy's Chapel, Philadelphia, Pa.; Atlantic City, N. J.

Ruthenian: Phoenixville, Pa.; Chester, Pa.; Point Breeze, Philadelphia, Pa.; Wilmington, Del.

Servian: Steelton, Pa.; Ambler, Pa. Greek: Harrisburg, Pa.

The foreign population that we are called upon to aid numbers about 40,000 in the City of Philadelphia and 600,000

in the State of Pennsylvania, to say nothing of the numbers spread over the entire area of the United States. Those who know these facts cannot but regret that there should ever be a readiness to sell church properties located in the very districts where these people reside, and which could be used for the spread of Christ's Kingdom, for the uplift of our fellow men and for the greater glory of God.
